

Amendments to the Specification

Please replace the paragraph beginning on page 4, line 1 through line 16, with the following rewritten paragraph:

(5) According to the invention disclosed in Japanese Patent Publication No. ~~Hei 7-1166670~~ Hei 7-116670, a multilayered article of inorganic fibers is formed with longitudinal slits perpendicular to the top and bottom surfaces and alternately from the opposite surfaces. Said slit does not extend entirely in the thickness direction. Then, the article is compressed to reduce the thickness, and is packaged. The packaged mat is then unpacked on site, and folded by bending it along the slits by 180 degrees, so that the inorganic fibers are built-up longitudinally. The slits need to be provided with margins so that the mat may not be cut apart. If the slits are shallow, the operation of folding the article is obstructed to make it difficult to produce a mat. If, on the other hand, the slits are too deep, the articles can be cut apart. Additionally, since the slits are formed with margins, the top and bottom surfaces of the mat produce steps or undulations, which by turn produce gaps that are poorly thermally insulating when the mat is placed in position. Since the surfaces that are brought into contact with the corresponding structures are not bonded, the mat can hardly maintain its intended profile without some holding means. In other words, the mat is dimensionally unstable.